DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 954 SO 015 710

AUTHOR Stoddard, Ann H.; Drummond, Robert
TITLE A Conceptual Model for Teaching about Economic Disparities.
PUB DATE Apr 84
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (68th, New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Design; Curriculum Evaluation; Economically Disadvantaged; *Economic Factors; Economics Education; *Economic Status; *Models; *Poverty; Secondary Education; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

A model that can be used to teach secondary students about economic disparity and its effect on the total economic welfare of the country is presented. The model has three phases. In the first phase of curriculum planning, students' needs are determined, goals and objectives are set, and content is selected. The second phase concerns teaching strategies. A seven-step process is proposed for teaching about disparities: developing awareness, initiating the task (helping the student know what the task is and when it must be completed), developing alertness (helping the student learn the techniques needed to solve the problem), developing selectiveness (helping students evaluate the information they process), synthesizing, applying principles, and evaluating the course. Examples are provided of each of these steps. The third phase of the model deals with modes of teaching. Media, newspapers, periodicals, books, and pamphlets are discussed as excellent resources for teaching about economic disparities. (RM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED245954

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ann H. Stoddard

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR TEACHING ABOUT ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

Ann H. Stoddard and Robert Drummond
University of North Florida

Presented at the
American Educational Research Association
New Orleans, Louisiana
April, 1984

SP 015 710

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR TEACHING ABOUT ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

Ann H. Stoddard and Robert Drummond

Introduction

In past years, many books have dramatically focused on the cultures of poverty. Harrington's The Other America described the characteristics of this culture so vividly that, in 1964, Lyndon Johnson initiated a national program, War on Poverty. Lewis (1966), in La Vida, not only developed a thesis that the poor constituted a special culture, but also stated that its origin could be found in the existence of a market economy with success values that blame failure on personal inadequacy. The argument of the causes and curses of poverty has not resulted in much change. Even when families require assistance from public sources, this complex predicament of poverty has not been eradicated.

While everyone knows that poverty exists, there is a question as to the extent the nature and scope of poverty is understood. An interview of 100 high school juniors and seniors conducted by the writers revealed that 70% of those interviewed perceived personal factors as the major cause of poverty. Only 20% perceived social factors as the major cause, and 10% checked "do not know". While 75% of the students questioned saw a low level of living as a result of poverty, a smaller percentage, 8%, saw inferior schooling and impairment of production as a cause of poverty. Three

percent checked delinquency and lost talent as consequences of poverty. Only 5% recognized that poverty tends to perpetuate itself from one generation to the next, while one student or 1%, realized that poverty has an impact on the economy of the state.

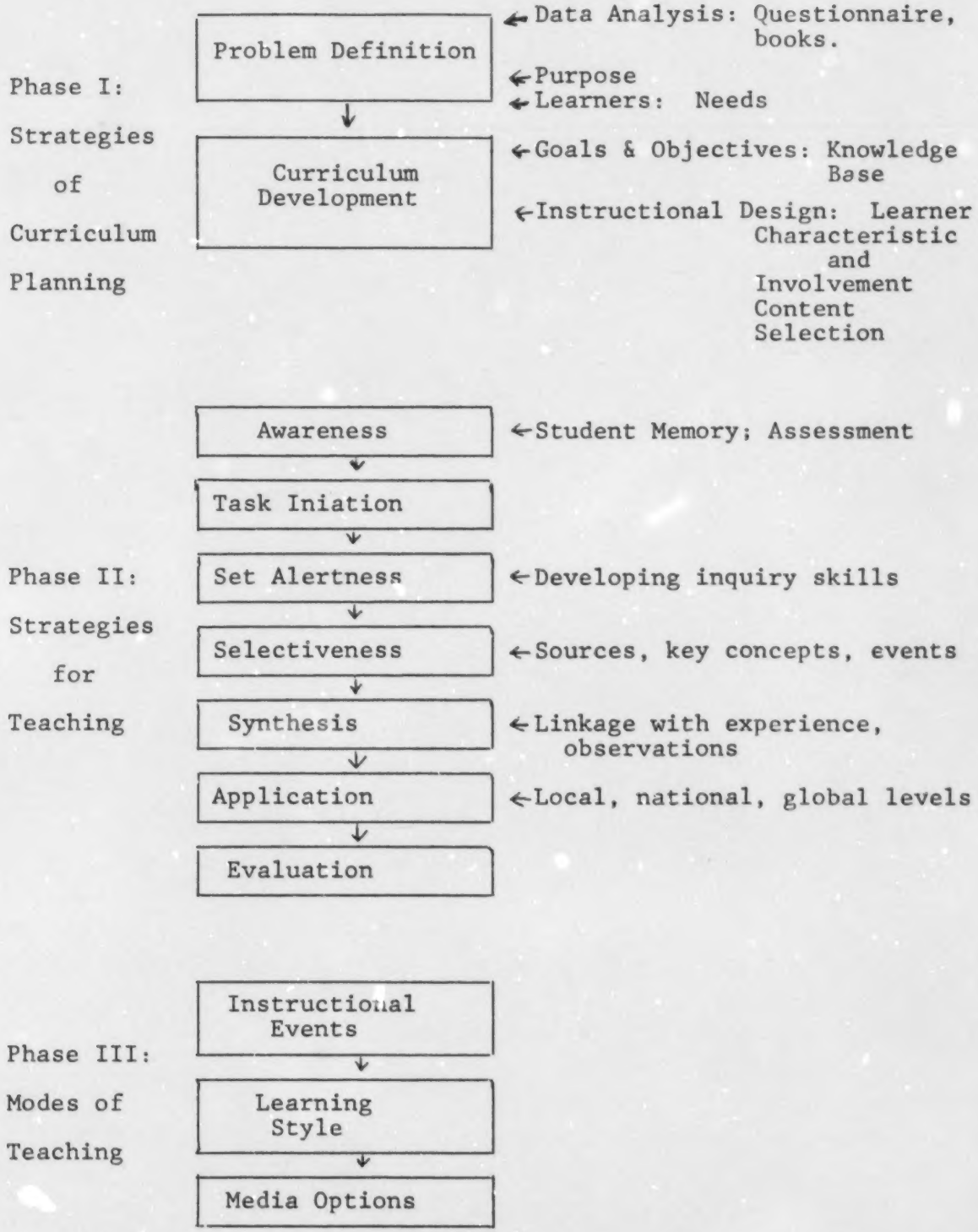
Two general conclusions may be drawn from this investigation. First, students have some cognizance of poverty. Second, students have less awareness of the causes of economic disparity, the nature of the income distribution problem, and the impact of economic disparity on the economy of the state.

Issues of economic disparities are constantly in the news media. These current problems provide an excellent point of departure for teaching about economic disparity, especially since economic textbooks provide little or no information on the topic. In addition, little curriculum material has been developed to assist teachers in presenting the topic and in helping students fully understand economic disparity and its effect on the total economic welfare of the country.

This paper presents a model that can be used to inculcate economic disparities into a general economics course, or to develop a separate course. This three-phase model provides an appropriate framework for organization, implementation, and evaluation, as illustrated in Figure I. The three distinct phases are planning, strategies for teaching and modes of teaching. Together these phases include the elements of curriculum design.

The Conceptual Model

(Figure I)



1. Defining the problem
2. Establishing the goals and objectives
3. Determining content
4. Generating strategies for teaching
5. Selecting modes of teaching
6. Evaluating outcomes.

In the first phase, the major goals are set through data analysis, and reflect the needs of the learners. In the second phase, strategies for teaching are generated from learners' past experiences and skills. The final phases, using instructional events, includes media options to accommodate the learning styles of students.

Phase One: The problem

In the curriculum planning stage, consideration should be given to learner's needs. For example, assume that the social studies faculty has identified as one of its major goals assisting students to identify scientific technological and economic changes and their impact on ways of living, the human, condition and the environment. The question is raised: Does the goal meet the needs of the learners? Basically, the definition of "need" centers around the concept of "gap" or "imbalance" in the curriculum - what is lacking in terms of what one must do to take one's place in society. In the case of economic disparity, data analyses confirmed the gap. The use of the questionnaire and textbook analysis revealed a students lack of knowledge about a prevalent societal problem and textbooks' neglect in presenting the topic. Textbooks

tend to present information about macroeconomics than microeconomics. These combined elements demonstrate a sound rationale for including the topics or selected subtopics in the present curriculum.

Identifying the needs of learners are important for curriculum planners, for it makes a difference in the selection of content, methods of presentations, and selection of instructional materials. On the secondary level, psychological factors such as need for recognition, need for independence, and need for acceptance are dominant.

Futhermore, the needs of the learner are influenced by several sources, the first being the needs of society. Planners must analyze what society wants and expects. Does society see the school as a change agent or as one that preserves the status quo? Second, the need of the culture is considered. This issue considers children from deprived or "disadvantaged" background. As cited in several books, these learners bring particular learning deficits to the classroom, but they also bring positive features that are often ignored. When discussing economic disparity, one of their strengths lie in processing a clearer understanding of the nature and scope of poverty and its relation to social change. The needs of individuals is the third category. Planners need to recognize the concerns that adolescents have and how adolescents measure their success.

Planning

The statement of goals and objectives should be communicable in terms of economic conditions and demands as represented by careful analysis of the marketplace. The goals should represent long range directions, while objectives should be stated more explicitly for instructional purpose. The objectives should indicate clearly what the teacher intends to accomplish when providing classroom experience to enable learners to achieve a goal.

The functions of objectives bring out such points as providing a basis for selection of learning activities and serving as guidelines for evaluation. Objectives serve as criteria for appraising pupil behavior, growth and development. Finally, objectives can improve the teaching process by guiding teachers in thinking about and planning learning experiences and helping them in selecting and developing instructional materials and strategies that will produce the intended outcome.

Content Selection

Because a paucity of economic textbooks contain material on economic disparity, meaningful selection of content will involve variations from learning situation to another. Also, the content will depend upon the concepts, generalizations, skills and values to be emphasized. For example, a discussion of poverty among female heads of households might place a value on how the market perceives the worth of women. The concepts to be taught might include:

The strategy of teaching might be an open ended discussion where the student will share his readings with the class and make an hypothesis about the state of women in the labor market. Gathering the material for discussion develop the research skills.

Wulf and Schave (1984) suggests four methods for selecting content: (a) through research into the literature, (b) through the aid of an expert, and (c) through asking an expert and through a needs assessment. Figure 2 illustrates a model for content development.

Content, once selected, can be amended but it serves as the conceptual scope of the curriculum. Because of the change that our economy constantly undergoes, new input for curriculum is necessary.

New input can be reserved for the students themselves as they encounter new information during the research. Building on the strategy of the inquiry, students learnings are multifaceted, e.g. not only do they increase their knowledge, they increase research skills, organization skills, communication skills and thinking processes.

Phase Two

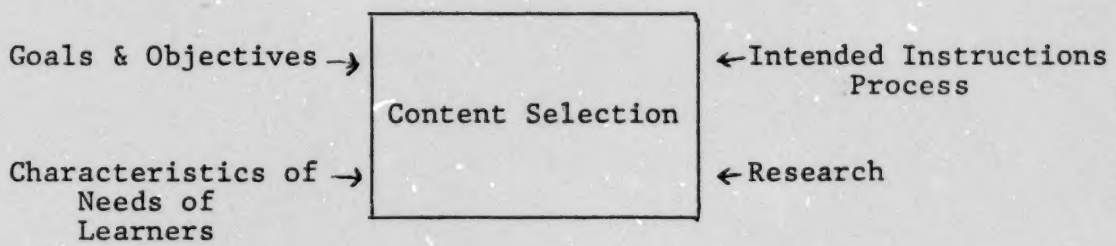
A seven-stage model is proposed to teach students about disparities.

Stage I: Developing Awareness

The first stage in the teaching/learning process is to help students develop an awareness of disparities. They

Content Selection

(Figure II)



have been exposed to much information about disparities from past experiences. Although much of this information was not taught as a regular part of their social studies curriculum, they have seen many examples on television, or have seen articles in newspapers and magazines. They have observed many examples of disparities in school, on their way to school, in their community, and in their neighborhood, for example, housing, type of cars individuals own, type of clothes worn.

Not only does the teacher have to guide the recall of the students past experiences and knowledge, but to identify their values, attitudes, and interests. As in most models, there is a need to assess the entry knowledge, attitudes, values, and interests of students. Some value clarification exercises might be a good way to find out the values held by students on certain issues.

Stage 2: Task Initiation

The second step of the model is task initiation. Goals and objectives have to be set in order to help students structure their learning and learning tasks. Learners need to know what the task is, when it has to be completed, and what they are expected to complete.

Stage 3: Developing Set or Alertness

The third step of the process is to help students develop set or alertness to the goals and objectives of the unit. Students should be guided to focus their attention on the learning required for the unit. They need to be made alert

to types of information; they need to be guided how to search for the information they need. How do they go about studying disparities in employment? Or in education? They need to learn the techniques needed to study the problem.

Stage 4: Developing Selectiveness

The fourth step is to guide students to develop selectiveness they need to be able not only to identify sources of information and resources but to be able to identify the key concepts, terms and situations. Many sources will be biased. They need to learn to identify sources of bias. Much information is not relevant to the issue being studied. Students need to learn guidelines for evaluating the information they process. Evaluation is the highest of the cognitive skills quite often neglected by teachers. Teachers many times stress knowledge, application, and comprehension rather than analysis and evaluation.

Stage 5: Synthesizing

The fifth step is to synthesize the information gained. The student needs to link the information with both present and past learning. The students also need to be guided to link their observations with their knowledge.

Stage 6: Applying Principles

The student needs to be aware of how the principles apply not only on the global level but on the national and local level. With the coverage of news on TV or in the popular press, students may feel disparities are not to be found

in their own community or school but in another section of the world. They sometimes get the message that the problem is minor in comparison to other issues and not be able to connect that one of the greatest implications for disparities is an economic one. Students are concerned about why they have to learn the material. They want and demand to know how the topics relate to them.

Stage 7: Evaluation

Evaluation is a key concept for providing not only the instructor but the student information on how well the content was understood. Did the students understand the economic implications of the disparities of salaries paid to women as opposed to men? How does this impact on career choice of women? What are the top 20 jobs for 1985-1990? How does ethnic membership, and social relate to this issue? Evaluation information can tell the teacher how well the objectives were achieved as well as how effective were the teaching strategies.

	Examples
Developing Awareness	Problem Situation: Values clarification exercise on selection of individuals from group representing all socio-economic and ethnic groups for survival in case of disaster, etc.
Initiating the Task	1. To identify the types of disparities of income found in

	our community.
	2. To identify techniques to study.
	3. To learn to actually evaluate types of information.
Developing Set Alertness	1. Observe and record instances on the way to school.
	2. Field trip to observe cross sections of the community.
	3. Asking students to identify procedures of how to study topic.
	4. Interviews with people from the community.
Developing Selectiveness	1. Identify data sources - census information, material from Chamber of Commerce.
	2. Department of Labor Statistics
	3. Interview data from major, key citizens.
Synthesizing	1. Linking the microcosmos with macrocosmos.
	2. Linking observations with knowledge.
	3. Linking past instances with present.
Applying the Learning	1. Discussion of techniques to help decrease disparities.

2. Developing a sensitivity to local problems and fellow students who are victims of economic disparities.

Evaluating

1. Achievement test on unit
2. Papers or news items or stories written by students on topic.
3. Additional reading, interviewing, completed beyond required study.

Rationale

Learning about disparities involves a number of different categories of learning. It demands intellectual skills, verbal skills, attitudes, and cognitive strategies. Gagne (1974, 1977) has pointed out that different conditions are necessary for different types of learning. Although students have different aptitudes and learning styles, certain basic dimensions are related to effective teaching and student learning (Florida Domain of Learning, 1983).

It is important to spend time helping students develop problem-solving skills and cognitive strategies. The model stresses the need for teachers to guide students

to learn how to learn. Travers (1977) noted that there are two aspects to learning to learn. The first is to master a wide range of problem-solving skills and the second is to know when to drop a particular strategy if it is not working.

The model emphasizes the need to incorporate new information into the students' existing cognitive structures and to show application and transfer of the learning.

Phase Three

The third phase of the model relates to the utilization as well as the evaluation of the use of media and takes into consideration the modes of presenting the information and concepts. The model is presented in Figure 3. There are three phases to the model: Instructional Events, Media Options, and Learning Styles.

Instructional Events

The choice of media is partially determined by the instructional events for which the media is to be utilized. Three elements of the teaching process which might influence the choice of media are how the teacher wants to organize and develop the unit, how the teacher wants to present the subject matter, and how the teacher wants to evaluate student achievement.

Media can be effective in accomplishing a number of components of the teaching process. It can be used to help focus student attention, to help students recall previous and prerequisite learning, to guide the learning process, to guide retention of the material and to guide transfer of learning.

Learning Style

The effectiveness of the media will depend upon the learning style of the students being taught. Not all types of media presentations will be effective for all students. Grasha and Riechmann (1974) have identified six types of styles: Independent, Avoidant, Collaborative, Dependent, Competetive, and Participant. Kolb (1976) isolated four types of learners: those who prefer Reflective Observation, those who prefer Abstract Conceptualization, those who prefer Active Experimentation, and those who are Concrete Experiencers.

Media Options

There are a variety of media options which can be used effectively in teaching disparities. One of the newest modes would be the computer. There are games and simulations available to teach some of the concepts and dimensions and a need for further curriculum development and expansion in this area.

Certainly television is an excellent source for current topics on disparities. Video taping could be done from field trips and interviews so that material would be available from year to year or class to class. There are numerous motion

pictures being produced on selected topics. Students might even enjoy producing their own movie or video cassette production. When time, budget, and lack of equipment are problems, the cassette tape player and slide camera can be used to produce audio visual presentations on the topics being studied.

Bulletin boards and work sheets are traditional modes of communicating information to the students. Although texts are a common source of knowledge for students, many books have limited information on the topic and students need to learn to use the other resources or printed materials available to them such as newspapers, periodicals, government and state documents, pamphlets, etcetera.

Rationale

The teacher needs to look at the characteristics of his or her learners as well as the components of the teaching process to make effective use of media in the learning process. Independent learners and those who prefer abstract conceptualization might do quite well in doing library research and reading resource materials. Collaborative learners prefer group projects and problem solving. Participant learners and those who like active experimentation would enjoy interviewing, producing documentaries, and the like. Some students will excel in producing materials while concrete learners prefer simulation and hands on experience.

We can look at the types of stimuli (i.e.: spoken word, still pictures, printed word) and see that certain types of

media will appeal to the visual learner other than to the suditory learner.

Evaluation in this model focuses on choosing media by looking at learning style and the systems of the lesson or teaching process required to produce student learning. The teacher is viewed as a facilitator who provides the intellectual guidance necessary for teaching the concepts of disparities. The teacher does encourage students to learn the strategies necessary to understand the topic, locate appropriate information, analyze it, synthesize it and apply it. Students should be guided knowing the types of sources from which they can best learn.

(Figure III)

LEARNING STYLES	INSTRUCTIONAL EVENTS	MEDIUM
STYLE	DIMENSIONS	Television
Independent	1. Organization and Development	Computer Simulation
Avoidant	2. Presentation of Subject Matter	Video Tape Recordings
Collaborative	3. Evaluation of Achievement	16mm Motion Pictures
Dependent		Slides
Competitive		Work Sheets
Participant		Printed Matter:
LEARNING	COMPONENTS	Newspapers, Periodicals, Books, Pamphlets
Preferences	Focusing Attention	
Concrete Experiences	Recalling of Prerequisite Learning	
Reflective Observation	Guiding the Learning Process:	
Abstract Conceptualization	intellectual guidance, knowledge of results, etcetera	
Active Experimentation	Guiding Retention	
	Guiding Transfer	

Summary

The issue of how to distribute social services becomes increasingly critical in the 1980's. The recent federal policies have created a new group of poor, with little expansion of opportunity, individual security and economic stabilization. With this shift attention focuses on mechanisms to distribute services more effectively and equitably without stigma. With this conceptual model, teachers can help students develop a way of thinking about economic problems that generate positive and acceptable results. As Edwin Nourse (1966) said nearly two decades ago, students need the tools of reasoning and analyses which will allow them to be counted upon to help solve the problems that will persist in their adult lives.

References

Grasha, A. F. Observations on relating teaching goals to student response styles and classroom methods. American Psychologist, 1972, 27, 144-147.

Kolb, D. Learning style inventory technical manual. Boston: McBee and Company, 1976.

Lewis, O. La vida. New York: Random House, 1966.

Nourse, E. R. Current aspects of our persistent economic problems. Social Education, 1966, 30, 234-235.

Wulf, K. & Schave, B. Curriculum design. Glenville, Illinois: Scott Foresman, 1984.